



## Just a Tiny Dot

A tiny stroke of ink.

A suspended dot.

That's what the Yud, the tenth letter of the Hebrew Alphabet, looks like.

It's a tiny speck of a letter. In and of itself, it doesn't tell you much. At the same time, letters form words, and words express ideas. Our words can be powerful media to convey concepts deep within our minds and hearts, and each of those words is comprised of building blocks we call letters.

Each letter, each fundamental building block, has its own character, its particular contribution to a respective word. Each letter's shape and sound are distinctive, representing a unique place in the desired expression. Even the tiny Yud.

When Rabbi Sholom Dovber, the fifth Lubavitcher Rebbe, taught his son [Rabbi] Yosef Yitzchak (who eventually grew into the sixth Rebbe) the meanings of each Hebrew letter, he pointed out that every letter begins with a Yud. Every letter is launched with its first drop of ink, an initial flourish, a Yud.

Conceptually, the Rebbe taught his son, we create many letters and words through the course of our lives. And the Yud needs to form the heart of every letter, every expression. The Yud's tiny stroke represents our essential existence, our purpose in life and our core connectedness to our Creator. Deep within the human psyche, perhaps far beyond our conscious layers, we all have a Yud, a core recognition: We exist for a purpose.

Meaningful life begins with a primal recognition of our place in the world. But that's only the beginning. We need to expand that dot of recognition, and broadening it into letters and words. That is our collective mission in life.

Practically speaking, our days are filled with choices, behaviors and interactions. Those are all expressions of our personalities; they form our letters and words, so to speak. At the same time, our 'letters' all need to flow from a core, an essential recognition that we're here to serve, that G-d created us to bring meaning to the world.

The tiny dot in your soul is where meaningful life begins.

*(by Rabbi Mendy Herson from <http://www.lchaimweekly.org/>)*

## Purifying the Soil

With the tenth and most spectacular plague imminent – and with it, the impending release of the Jewish nation after more than two centuries in Egypt – G-d gave the Children of Israel their first mitzvah (Divine command) as a nation. “This month shall be for you the beginning of the months, it shall be the first of the months of the year.” (Shemos/Exodus 12:2) The classic New Year, defined as the annual cycle that began with the creation of Adam and Chava (Eve), starts with the beginning of the month of Tishrei. But “this month” of Nissan, the month of the Jewish redemption, is the Torah’s reference point as the first month for all of the Jewish festivals, because it was (and continues to be) the point at which the Jewish spiritual consciousness started to blossom (see [www.torah.org/learning/kolhakollel/5762/simchastorah.html](http://www.torah.org/learning/kolhakollel/5762/simchastorah.html)). But as essential as the ten plagues and subsequent redemption were to our national mission, they were ultimately only prerequisites to the pinnacle event, the acceptance of the Torah at Mount Sinai. If the actual beginning of the Jewish national experience came with the Revelation at Sinai, fifty days later in the first week of the month of Sivan, the third month, by this calculation. why is Sivan not the first month?

Rabbi Moshe Feinstein (1895-1986; Rosh Yeshiva/Dean of Mesivtha Tifereth Jerusalem in New York City; the leading Halachic/Jewish legal decisor and foremost leader of Torah Jewry of his time) explains that for the giving of the

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Torah to have any purpose, the acceptance had to be one with viability. That viability was contingent upon great preparations of the spirit incumbent on each Jew prior to his arrival at Sinai. His sense of truth and faith had to be sharpened, his positive character traits fortified while the negative ones brought about by extended exposure to the heathenous culture were excised. This process of self-purification started with the Exodus and continued throughout the next forty-nine days. Therefore, continues Rabbi Feinstein, the counting started from the month of their release – in Nissan, when this process commenced – because it was only through this process that there could be the acceptance of the Torah in Sivan.

From this, concludes Rabbi Feinstein, we see the awesome responsibility that we have as parents raising and educating our young children, the obligation to instill in them fine character and pure faith so they are well equipped for their acceptance of the Torah, expressed both in their Jewish education and performance of mitzvos.

It is too easy to think of Torah study and mitzvah observance as simply another discipline, another intellectual pursuit to absorb with related actions to execute. But when we remember that the Torah is not just another book of knowledge, but is, rather, the Divine Guide to G-d Consciousness and Emulation, it becomes clear why such preparation is necessary. Just as a farmer does not punch a few holes in the earth, throw in some seed and expect robust produce to burst forth, so, too, we know we must invest time and effort in preparing the groundwork toward becoming fertile recipients of the Torah's wisdom. Our challenge is appreciating that any deficient spiritual fruit are not a product of defective "seed"; rather, they are a reflection of the poor condition of polluted "soil", a soul that demands active purification from the societal values inconsistent with Jewish thought.

*(by Rabbi Pinchas Avruch from Project Genesis at [www.torah.org](http://www.torah.org))*

**Mr. and Mrs. Yehuda Bromberg** are sponsoring kiddush this Shabbat  
in honor of their daughter,  
**Esther.**



Kol Hanaarim– Father and Son Learning – Friday evening during the winter at 7:15 p.m. in The Shul.  
Cholent and other refreshments are served. Each session is 'topped off' at the end with a fascinating story. For any questions, please see Rabbi Itzkowitz.

#### Yahrzeits This Week:

Ethel Fischer 15 Shevat - Wednesday night / Thursday for husband Yaakov Mordechai ben HaRav Zev Yehudah

#### SHUL DIRECTORY

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#### DAVENING AND SHIURIM SCHEDULE

##### Friday, 1/19 — 9 Shevat

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.  
Candles — 4:53 p.m.  
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 4:55 p.m.

##### Shabbat, 1/20 — 10 Shevat

Shacharit — 9:00 a.m.  
Sof Z'man Kriat Shema — 9:48 a.m.  
Minchah — 4:40 p.m.  
Shiur — after Minchah  
Ma'ariv — 5:56 p.m.

##### Sunday, 1/21 — 11 Shevat

Shacharit — 8:00 a.m.  
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 5:00 p.m.

##### Monday, 1/22 — 12 Shevat

Shacharit — 6:50 a.m.  
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 5:00 p.m.

##### Tuesday, 1/23 — 13 Shevat

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.  
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 5:00 p.m.

##### Wednesday, 1/24 — 14 Shevat

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.  
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 5:00 p.m.

##### Thursday — Tu B'Shevat, 1/25 — 15 Shevat

Shacharit — 6:50 a.m.  
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 5:00 p.m.

##### Friday, 1/26 — 16 Shevat

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.  
Candles — 5:01 p.m.  
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 5:00 p.m.